

### The Voice of the Common People

A department open to the free discussion of any question of social or political economy, or any problem of public interest. Correspondents will please avoid personalities. Write on one side of the paper only; sign true name. If it is desired that name be not printed, please so state. Letters without name will not be published.

PORTLAND, Or., April 15.—Editor, Labor Press.—The tendencies of all that has gone before in social evolution makes for socialism. Slowly, yet surely, does civilization emerge from each succeeding decade with nobler thoughts, grander visions, greater achievements and a finer sense of justice. The individual, as an individual, must continue to give way to the collective unit, called society, until the future individual interests are dissolved in the common welfare. When that condition is arrived at we will have emerged from savagery into that society, now termed by political economists as socialism. This will mean for the first time in human history, a real civilization.

In our savage state the universal business of all tribes was warfare; conquest and conquering. This was invariably the function of tribal government. The individual did not conduct invasion or defense, as an individual. As we have gradually advanced in the civilizing process, we have acquired governmental function of various social needs, prominent among which are our postal, highway and school systems. Their proposals were vigorously attacked, just as the proposal of socialism has been, and continues to be. They were looked upon as innovations that were dangerous to personal liberty, unjust and impracticable. The proposition to carry a letter across the country for two cents, to people who had no conception of organized society, seemed altogether impossible, and the advocate was looked upon as a wild-eyed agitator, much the same as the average person of today looks upon the proposition of carrying a passenger across the country for a dollar or so of actual expense.

The well-to-date and many of the clergy opposed the public-school system on the ground that general education of the people would destroy their usefulness, and disqualify them from being "just common people." The prevailing notion was, that only the well-to-do should be educated and prepared to manage the affairs of government. Today education has become compulsory, and we are well on the way to the supplying of free text books, and even food and clothing to our school children. Society has begun to learn that each child is an asset to be developed to its greatest degree of utility, and that for every neglected and uneducated child society must answer to itself.

The chief obstacle to the fuller development of the collective idea is, that the old savage instinct of individuality. This, in our modern business world, means the ability to extract profits, to acquire that acumen to successfully come into possession of something produced or possessed by another, by means of trade or barter. That old commercial instinct has become so thoroughly implanted in us that we regard speculating or trading in commodities with more dignified importance than their production. This practice has become so general that we are seeing its effects in the increasing difficulty of a great mass of humanity to acquire anything like a decent and respectable existence in a country with boundless resources and teeming with wealth. The matter of tariff on commodities will not meet this difficulty; for just so long as we adhere to the rule of producing and distributing commodities on a gambling basis instead of for social use, just so long will these difficulties remain with us.

F. CRABTREE, Chairman Press Committee, Branch 2, Socialist Party of Portland, Or.

### The Value of Vocational Education

The movement for vocational education in this country is now in full swing. Six states already have more or less complete systems of vocational training, and a number of others are considering legislation to introduce into the public schools work that will fit boys and girls more directly for earning a living. In order to aid in the movement the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education has issued a brief, explicit statement of what it considers the main principles that should underlie the proposed legislation, and the United States Bureau of Education, while not giving official endorsement to the program as a whole, is sending copies of the pamphlets to those who apply for it.

What are the essentials if a state system of practical education? The society's circular endeavors to answer this question. In a few short technical paragraphs it sums up certain of the fundamental policies of vocational education as this society sees it. It urges state aid to the local communities. It recognizes four fields of vocational training as the kind the state ought to furnish its boys and girls; industrial education for workers in the trades and industries and in the household; agricultural education for the farmers; commercial education for clerks, salesmen, etc., and "household arts education" for non-wage-earning occupations connected with the home. In other words, the state ought to make it possible for children to receive in the public schools instruction that will fit them

directly for productive employment in any of these useful occupations, instead of sending them out with little or no training for the real work they are going to do.

Experience has already been sufficient to indicate in what kind of schools this vocational training can be given. The circular cites a number of types of schools, among them the following: The all-day vocational schools, where the pupils can spend at least one year in all-day attendance; the part-time schools, where boys and girls regularly employed may come for a few hours each week; the evening schools in industry or agriculture, for persons over 16 years of age who work during the day, and similar evening schools for classes in household arts.

It is significant that the six states that have already set up systems of vocational education—Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Wisconsin and Indiana—have long had excellent schools. The newer education which they are introducing is not intended to replace the old, but to supplement it; to give training for a specific employment in addition to the regular schooling.

Under the present system vocational education frequently helps the employers who are thus able to get their pick of young skilled workers at low wages. Still a complete education also helps the worker. It makes them better equipped to participate in the management and operation of the co-operative commonwealth.

due and first-aid methods. Fifty-eight per cent of all industrial accidents are shown by statistics to be due to negligence, carelessness or lack of knowledge of employers or employees, as The Journal of the American Medical Association points out the vital necessity of learning everything possible about the causes and means of preventing these accidents must be evident to every man concerned in mining. To the operator it spells business success or failure; to the miner, life or the physical ability to work and support a family.

#### Big Companies Make Profit.

The report shows that the coal companies affected by the Supreme Court decision of last December had until then a still further advantage, in that their contracts with independent companies, by which they secured domestic coal at 65 per cent of tidewater prices, were not disturbed when the price of coal was increased in June. While the so-called independent operators paid their miners the same increase in wages as the larger coal companies, they got only 65 per cent of the price raise, while 35 per cent of it, or 8.75 cents a ton, went to the big companies.

As to the anthracite mine workers, the report says that they benefited by the strike agreement of May 20 last not only by an average increase of 5.6 per cent in their wages, "but through the concession of certain working conditions which were considered of importance, although they cannot be measured in terms of money; an additional item of importance to the miners being the partial recognition of their organization, both in the negotiations and in the form in which the agreement was signed."

#### Her Needs.

He—She has everything she needs to make her happy.  
She—But it's the things she does not need that a woman needs to make her happy.—Hochester Times.

### MINE OPERATORS SAVE LIVES

Organization Begins Systematic Effort to Prevent Accidents.

As the result of a conference which was held under the auspices of the United States Bureau of Mines last September, the American Mine Safety Association has been organized, with headquarters at Pittsburgh, Pa. Its members include the leading coal and metal mine operators, mining engineers and mine safety engineers of the country. Its purpose is the conservation of the life and health of the miner and a reduction in property loss due to explosions or fires in mines. It will attempt to place before the miners standard methods to be used in rescue work and in first aid to the injured.

The work of the Bureau of Mines in reducing the number of deaths in the mines has led to the adoption of many different types of rescue apparatus, and also to the use of many different methods of resuscitation and first aid to the injured. Hundreds of mines within the last three or four years have been equipped with rescue apparatus, rescue corps and first-aid corps. Many of the men, in emergencies, have developed their own ways of doing things. The organizers of this association feel that the most efficient methods and apparatus in actual use should be found and recommended to the mining industry for general use. There were 2,719 persons killed in the coal mines of the United States during the year 1911, and 3,106 seriously and 22,228 slightly injured. Nearly an equal number of men were injured in metal mines and quarries.

Mine operators now realize that it is more expensive to restore wrecked mines, more costly to fight damage suits through the courts, and less profitable to pay regulated liability charges or even workmen's compensation, than it is to bear the cost involved in reducing these charges by means of diminishing the number of accidents and the duration of the resulting disability by the adoption of improved safety, res-

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